



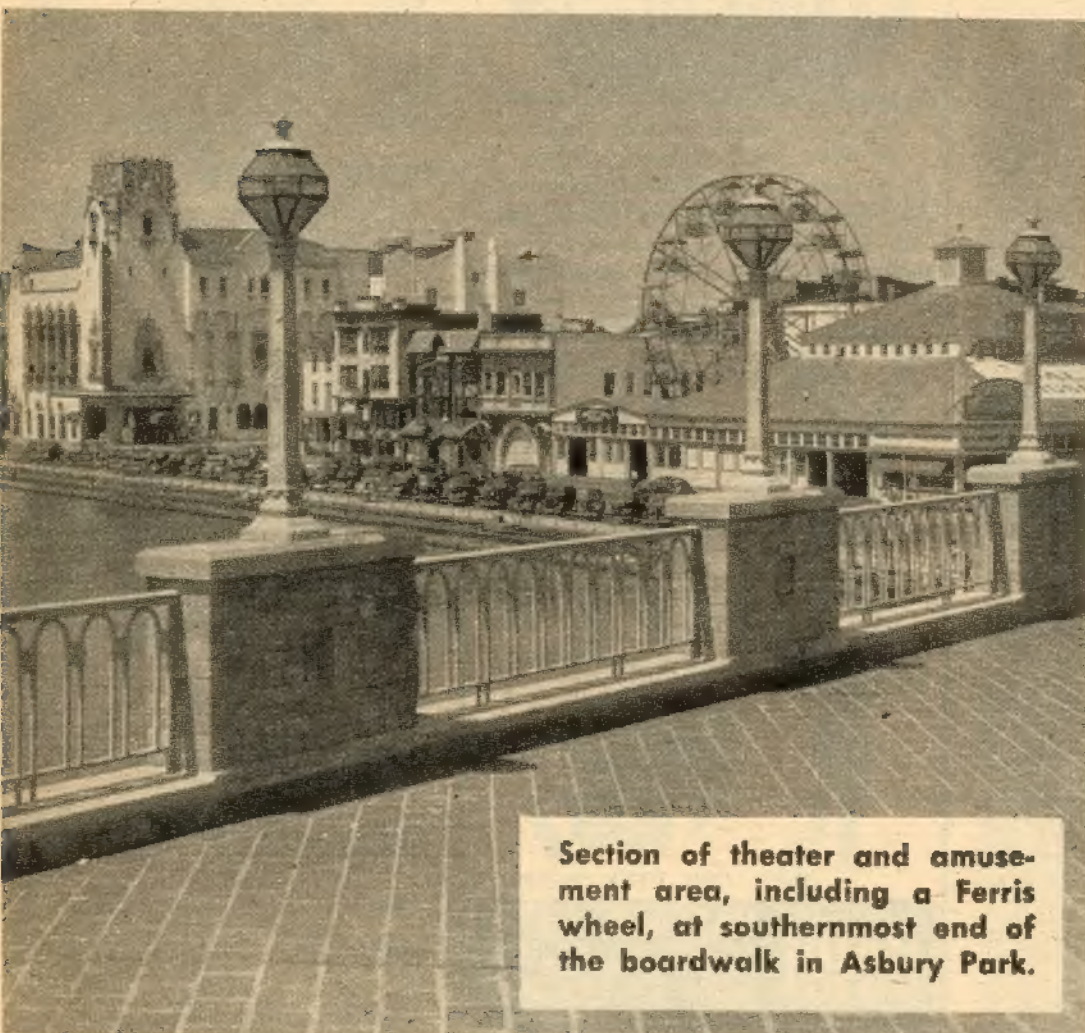
Beach peaches—today and yesteryear. Mid-20th century girls such as trio sunning selves on beach side of Manasquan Inlet jetty do not fear acquiring a tan while the beauty of around 1900, quite daring with bared knees, disported in a "nine-piece" suit of the times.



BEACH FUN and HIGH FINANCE

*Billion Dollar-a-Year 'Side' Industry
Made Possible by Amusements of Wide
Variety Down Where Land Meets Sea*

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM



Section of theater and amusement area, including a Ferris wheel, at southernmost end of the boardwalk in Asbury Park.

AUNT JUDITH ADAMS knew how to entertain the young folks who rounded Rum Point in the 1840s and set sail for her Absecon Island inn. She left them alone and busied herself getting dinner ready—a wise precaution, considering the goings-on.

Down on the beach, at low tide, the visitors danced to the rhythm of a fiddle. As Dr. T. K. Reed recalled in turn-of-the century reminiscences before Absecon Island became Atlantic City, "There was none of your mincing and smirking, but genuine fun and frolic—a regular jump-up-and-down, cross-over-Jonathan and figure-in-Jemima terpsichorean fling!"

At high tide they bathed and, in the doctor's words, "the hilarity of the occasion culminated when the young men of the party carried the blushing and screaming maidens to the top of the sand-hills, and, tying their feet

together, rolled them down to the water's edge." Boy met girl by the seashore, as it were.

Reflecting on that lost youth, Dr. Reed wondered: "Where shall we find, in the refinement of the present age, a sufficient compensation for the loss of this rude form of jollity?" A good question, doctor; a question as provocative today as when asked in 1900.

BOY still meets girl on the singing sands, but such rude joys as tying together the feet of blushing (that's what the doctor said) maidens and pushing them off sand dunes are frowned on by the teen-age columnists. If Dr. Reed thought things in the seashore amusement world had been "refined" by 1900, he should see New Jersey beaches these days.

Millions of people who pause beside the toppling waves must be kept

This is the 12th of a series of articles on the New Jersey Shore. Next week's installment will consider the advertising or promotional aspects of annual treats such as the "Miss America" pageant, "Big Sea Day" and baby parades.

Atlantic City's world famous Beach Patrol poses for a group photograph. Since 1913 the life-saving detail has rescued nearly 65,000 persons.



amused. Dedicated to this noble service between June and September is an army of hotel workers, food vendors, night club entertainers, movie moguls, taffy pullers, chair pushers, bingo callers, wheel spinners, party boat captains, jockeys and gamblers (who toil without public praise).

Amusement is a multimillion-dollar industry down where waves meet strand. Indeed, seaside amusement may be the biggest New Jersey industry of all. Counting food and lodging, it probably runs to far more than a respectable one billion dollars annually. That's no "rude form of jollity;" some feel it often isn't even jollity.

Lest psychiatrists and theologians hasten to explain this never-a-dull-moment era in terms of tranquilizing pills or a world on the chute to the nether world, harken to the words of an 1809 Long Branch visitor. He told of "innocent and reasonable" amusements—riding, walking, reading, "a cheerful cigar and a half pint of wine after dinner" or dancing and tea parties ("for the young").

WHY amusement? Well, said the Long Branch visitor, "they keep off that corroding disease of the mind, 'ennui,' and send the visitors and bathers back to their homes and firesides with improved health and fresh relish for the solid comforts of domestic happiness." Sic transit ennui.

Entertainment today revolves generally around a boardwalk, or, in less democratic atmospheres, around exclusive clubs or casinos. Regardless of whether the individual gets his amusement to the jostling of elbows or to the soft clink of ice in tall glasses, it usually costs money. Amusement is "refined"—and costly—for those who believe it can only be bought.

Yet hundreds of thousands of people in scores of quiet unboardwalked New Jersey seafront towns and back bay villages know simple pleasures

which cost little more than opening one's eyes to see and one's mind to imagine.

It costs nothing, for example, to sit on the sand with a pair of binoculars to watch the ships far at sea (or the bathing suits nearby). It costs nothing to pick up bright shells or to hunt gnarled driftwood. It costs nothing to wander down to the bays to watch the fishing boats come home or to watch sailboats tacking against the setting sun. It costs next to nothing to go crabbing off a dock, to fish off a jetty, to fly a kite off the beach at twilight.

STILL, despite what keepers of the boardwalk might think, the essential amusement element is the sea. This is the sea where people of all ages have found pleasure for a century and

a half merely by exposing themselves to the buffeting billows.

Exposing isn't exactly the right word, or, on second thought, maybe it is. Early records and laws indicate that male bathers enjoyed the ocean without benefit of bathing suit. As late as 1928 one North Shore resort which prides itself on its social standing had to enact an ordinance specifically forbidding bathing in the buff.

A century before that, gentlemen bathers used no suits in the Long Branch surf—if they got there before 6 a.m. However, ladies received the reassuring word that the bluff kept the beach well hidden from hotel windows, not that any lady would be looking anyway. The first male bathers at Ocean Grove in the 1870s "went off at a distance" and "bathed in the garb

of nature." Atlantic City waited until 1878 to require by specific law that a man be "so clothed as to prevent the indecent exposure of his body."

This bathing "in natural garb" died a sure death as the shore became popular—and it never extended to female bathers. When a lady went to sample the surf she made sure not so much as a square inch of epidermis outside her face or fingers caught the rays of the wicked sun or the leers of wicked males. She wore what one writer has called a "nine-piece suit"—blouse, vest, pantaloons, stockings, kerchief, shoes and a bonnet.

THOSE early suits took seven square yards of cloth, enough for a fair-sized tent. The *New York Daily Tribune* in 1868 scolded that bathing had become "a social event for no other purpose than to exhibit oneself." As a matter of fact, before the Civil War some of the vain young things who "exhibited" themselves put padding within their vests, although how they expected it to make any difference wrapped in seven yards of flannel is a mystery.

No lady got sunburned, tanned or freckled, the genteel magazines warned. If she did, *Godey's Ladies Book* was right there with a "recipe to remove tan and restore good looks." Very simple: "Wash the face at night with sour buttermilk and in the morning with weak bran tea, with a little cologne and lemon juice put into a cup of milk."

The ladies became more and more daring. In 1897 a scandalized visitor to Ocean City took one look—or several, maybe—and observed: "If some of these women were to come over to Weymouth Township and walk around the way they do here, there would be war!" That same year 200 women had to be "spoken to" at Ocean Grove.

Short sleeves appeared on women's blouses in the 1890s, a bold few wore

(Continued on Following Page)



Bluff and beach at Long Branch at height of glory as society resort from drawing in Leslie's Weekly of 1872. Lifeguards were un-

known at time but suspended from flagpole at water's edge are ropes which bathers affixed to waists before braving rough surf.

SHORE FUN

(Continued from Preceding Page)

bloomers at Cape May and Atlantic City in the early 1900s, and in 1907 several shameless hussies rolled their stockings in public. The alert police put a stop to that. Still, epidermis in public view was on its way.

NO ONE needs to be told that bathing suits are different today. They've "shrunk" throughout the 20th century—the transformation helped by some of the girls in the early Miss America pageants, who rolled their stockings below the knees, and by pioneers who defied the censors on the Atlantic City beach. It's true—Atlantic City in the early 1920s hired censors who carried rulers to measure suit lengths on both men and women. Skin was all right in the night clubs, but not in the sun.

There is a little footnote to history. When stockings were being discarded everywhere in the middle 1920s, two Cape May ladies clung to the old ways. Then one day on the beach, as the modest pair passed a crowd, someone said: "There go the covered wagons!" That afternoon ALL Cape May limbs caught the rays of the sun—and no fear of tan, either.

Beach manners have evolved, too. Back in the 1830s no lady appeared on

the beach without a male escort; visiting Englishwoman Mrs. Francis Trollope heard to her horror that Long Branch ladies actually asked men to accompany them. Her shocked sensibilities were only moderately appeased when she learned two ladies asked the same man, "as custom does not allow tete-a-tete immersion."

Long Branch contributed something else to seashore culture—the paid escort (the gigolo, in effect). The Branch in the 1890s returned to puritanical ways (at a time when gambling halls ran wide open on the bluff) and a lady needed an escort on the beach. So—Long Branch ladies hired them as casually as so many beach umbrellas, by the day, the week, or, if the young man had real charm, by the season.

THE Atlantic Ocean with its undertows and shifty ways lured many a gay vacationer to death, but until amusement began to verge on big business, they died mourned only by their relatives and friends. When hotel keepers, pitchmen and railroad officials began to live off the beach attractions, an ocean death could threaten to plunge their black-edged bank accounts into the red.

Thus, after 13 people drowned in Atlantic City in 1865, the hotelmen mourned sufficiently to put out ropes. During the 1870s and 1880s lives of bathers rested in the hands of guards

sponsored by hotels, railroads, a bit of city money and volunteer subscriptions. Eventually, in 1892, Atlantic City Council organized its widely envied Beach Patrol.

Elsewhere most lifesaving fell into the hands of volunteers who hoped to gain by hauling endangered bathers from the surf. Many fared right well, but, occasionally the rescued party clutched his wallet tightly. One such water-logged miser was hauled from the Cape May surf in 1869 by one Mr. Boynton, a volunteer-hoping-for-a-fee.

Fighting for breath, the man opened his purse and handed Mr. Boynton 50 cents. Mr. B. gravely handed back 49 cents in change, remarking that he did not "usually accept more than a life was worth."

Life guards these days adorn practically every beach, perched in bronzed and nose-peeled majesty atop wooden thrones surrounded by loyal teen-aged subjects. They do an incredibly fine job, too; rare is the life lost to the sea while the guards are on duty. Atlantic City's Beach Patrol of 135 members is world-renowned; since 1913 the patrol has rescued nearly 65,000 persons—and in all that time only 38 lives have been lost.

NOW, off the hot beach and up to the cool boardwalk. That, after all, is where the let's-not-get-depressed boys hold solid sway.

Atlantic City claims invention of the boardwalk in 1870, but Cape May records show that Cape May had enough beachfront boardwalk in 1868 to merit the name "Flirtation Walk." If Atlantic City didn't invent the 'walk, it did lift planking to its loftiest eminence in history.

Some 33 miles of the New Jersey shore now have boardwalks, ranging from the simple, uncluttered strips along the Sea Girt frontage to the intense money-catchers in Asbury Park, Point Pleasant, Seaside Heights, Atlantic City, Wildwood and a half dozen other places. Beachfront promenades aren't all pleasure; an occasional town official will declare (off the record) he wishes his town had no boardwalk. A few towns didn't rebuild their plankways after the 1944 hurricane blew them away.

THERE is not much to be gained by describing boardwalks. Anyone who has trod them knows what they are; anyone who hasn't, can't catch the atmosphere through words. From town to town they differ only in magnitude, each of them trying vainly to emulate in its own small to medium-large way the glitter of Atlantic City's Boardwalk.

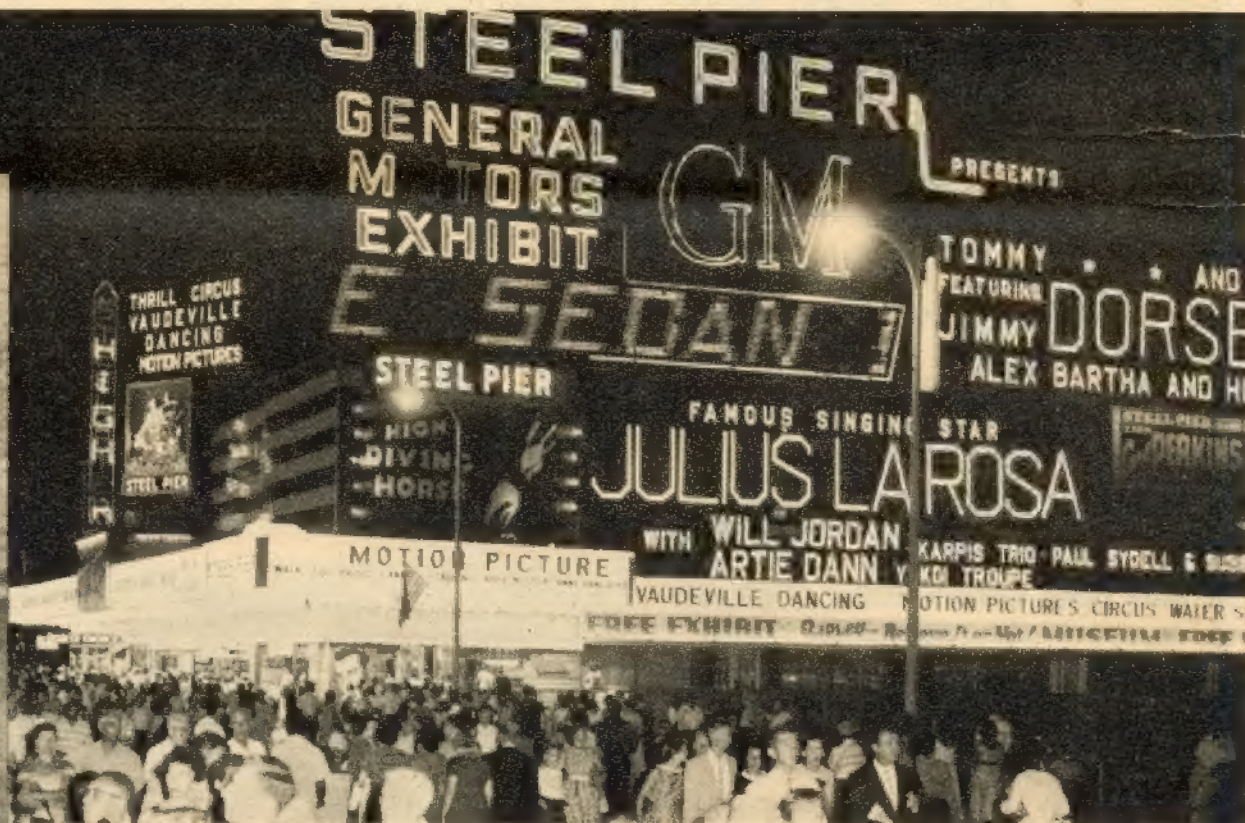
Amusements beside that 'Walk are fabulous—and have been for 75 years. The amusement piers, for example, date back a half century and more,

RIGHT: Dedicated to amusement of visitors is an army of workers from food vendors to entertainers. Here's night view of Atlantic City 'Walk.



Two boys crabbing in Barnegat Bay off Long Beach Island illustrate type of sport indulged in by those who spend more than day at shore.

RIGHT: Yachting, which includes boating of all kinds, is a leading amusement provider all along the shore from June to October.



and through the years they have presented an impressive range of amusements—from Sousa's Band to the Floradora Sextette, from opera singers to diving horses, from freaks to vaudeville stars, from movie premieres to "name" bands.

The "rides" are a usual boardwalk feature anywhere, running the gamut from "kiddie rides" and carousels to "thrill" spins and whirls. Each ride has its own purpose, but possibly there never has been anything like the Haunted Swing, a horror which prospered in Atlantic City in the 1890s.

Patrons of the Haunted Swing entered an ordinary-looking sitting room, complete with kerosene lamps, a filled china closet and a vast amount of heavy furniture. The unsuspecting sat in a swing suspended in the middle of the room and the attendant began to push them gently. Movement speeded up and suddenly the patrons visualized themselves swinging in a complete 360-degree circle.

ACTUALLY the swing moved only a few inches—the room revolved completely! Accounts tell of yelling and screaming, and small wonder. Fortunately the Haunted Swing is but a memory, along with the rack and other instruments of torture.

Atlantic City had its first merry-go-round in 1870, but the city's outstanding contribution to amusement (except for the amusement piers) was the first of what is now called the "Ferris" wheel. Atlantic City had such a wheel 20 years before George Washington Gale Ferris erected his wheel at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

For that matter, the modern "Ferris" wheel is almost identical to a wheel William Somers erected on the Boardwalk in 1891. Somers sought the Columbian concession and later sued Ferris for patent infringement,

but the latter died before the suit reached settlement.

Amusement parks grew up largely because the "day trippers" aboard special excursion trains demanded a full day in return for the dollar they spent for the round trip down from New York or Philadelphia. Railroads encouraged merry-go-rounds and beer gardens and Ferris wheels and fortune tellers to supplement their own "excursion houses" complete with dance halls, skating rinks and billiard rooms. If anyone went near the water, that wasn't the railroad's fault.

DAY TRIPPERS needed something to take home, too. They clutched eagerly at salt water taffy and picture postcards—and if you'll believe Atlantic City, brainy men of the "Queen of Resorts" perfected both.

Salt water taffy surely is a hallmark of Atlantic City, although the "original" can be bought under a variety of names from Sandy Hook to Cape May. This is the way the popular confection came into being, or at least it's one way the story-tellers put it:

Once upon a time in 1883 a young taffy puller named David Bradley found his sweets flooded by the sea, but he sold some anyway to a little girl customer. "That's salt water taffy, little sister," said the shopkeeper. The little girl's mother—or a bystander, depending on who recounts the story—suggested that the name "salt water taffy" could be a good sales slogan. Bradley, they say, lettered the name on muslin signs.

Some doubt that story, true, but nevertheless salt water taffy is big business. It's made in 25 flavors, packed in everything from ordinary boxes to piggy banks and sold by the millions of pounds. If you like to get your teeth into statistics, chew on the fact that Atlantic City alone ships three million pounds annually.

As for picture postcards, Atlantic

City claims that Mrs. Carl Voelker saw such cards on a trip to Germany in 1895 and on her return induced her husband to print 10,000 in color—and so introduced postcards to America. If Mrs. Voelker went all the way to Germany to discover postcards she wasted her fare, because Mayor William Ramsey of Keansburg printed picture postcards in 1881 and sold them for two for 5 cents to advertise his resort.

Again, small matter, except for shore postal clerks who, in season, cancel so many millions upon millions of postcards that they must wonder if anyone in the wide world ever writes anything but "having a wonderful time, wish you were here."

Of course they do; they might write "saw Jerry Lewis on the Boardwalk" or "heard Billy Graham at Ocean Grove" or "saw Dick Nixon at Mantoloking," or "Moss Hart was in Beach Haven this morning" (all of which could be true, by the way). Looking for the noted continues a favored time passer, although the noted by the New Jersey strand admittedly are not as numerous as long ago.

BACK in the days when Cape May and Long Branch welcomed Presidents regularly, the chief amusement was annoying the noble. Henry Clay arrived at Cape May in 1847, seeking quiet to mourn for his son recently slain in battle. The ladies pursued him as teen-agers now chase Mr. Presley—and those demure females wielded scissors to snip off locks of Mr. Clay's hair as keepsakes.

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln wished for peace in Long Branch in 1861, and said so. Long Branch respected her wishes—with an immense welcoming parade and a series of events such as cricket matches, grand balls and concerts. Immense crowds flocked to Cape May when President Pierce visited in 1855 and when President Ar-

thur came for a single day's visit in 1883, 2,500 well-wishers shook his hand. Small wonder Presidents of recent years have avoided resort towns.

In a way, you couldn't blame the Clay-chasers and the Pierce-pushers overly much. All they had to do in those days was bathe in the surf, flirt, drink a bit of good liquor, walk the beach or gamble in rooms hotels set aside for them. Sometimes the hotels sponsored formal balls and more frequently guests themselves promoted "hops," a favorite 19th century pastime at every hotel on the coast. The difference between a "hop" and a ball, it was said, was "the difference between a plain dress and one with trimmings."

THINGS have come a long way since then. Race tracks at Oceanport and Mays Landing help pass the dreary daytime hours when there is nothing out but sunshine. Night clubs while away the awful vacuum between yesterday's last race and tomorrow's first. Golf clubs and tennis courts give the ball-chasers the chance to keep on the run. "Name" bands move the feet of the young, rocking chairs ease the chatter of the old. Band concerts at Asbury Park and Ocean City and Cape May catch some of the spirit of another day when something didn't have to cost money to be worthwhile.

There are some who contend that the riotous pace of the bars and clubs and movie houses and boardwalks and amusement piers is attuned only to the pace of the "down-for-the-dayers." There is a sneaking suspicion that many a "down-for-the-monther" is not above seeking divertissement either.

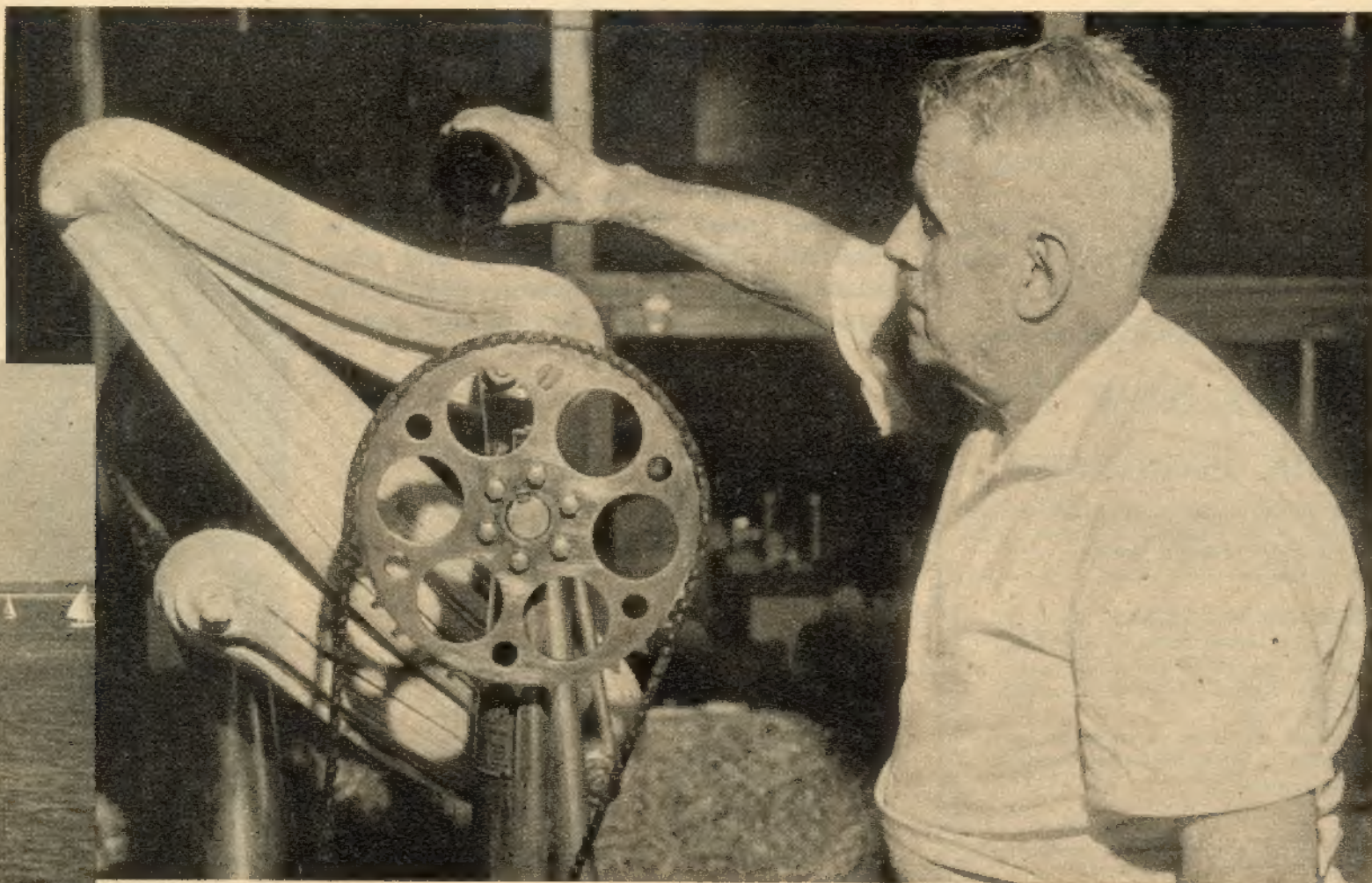
Long stays do give a vacationist a chance to seek the less obvious amusement—to master the intricacies of a sneak box or a Comet on Barnegat Bay, to learn to ride a surfboard through the endless procession of waves, to become a surf caster, to seek fluke in the bays, to have a little power boat tied up nearby, to meet some neighbors for a beach party after dark.

AMUSEMENT is a very personal thing, at the New Jersey Shore as well as at home. A person seeking pleasure by the sea can find almost anything his heart desires. A writer for the United States Gazette summed it up rather well in 1832. He makes sense in the Atom Age as well as his own:

"Those who bathe only may depend on as good a surf as the Atlantic can make. Those who go to eat will be sure of a good appetite for a good dinner. Those who are fond of shooting and fishing will find game in abundance; those who go to read or lounge may read or lounge as much as they please.

"Old and young will have occasional opportunities to dance a little in the evening, while those who go to grumble may sit of a hot day among the adders in the sand or chase the fiddlers in the mud and grumble to their heart's content."

Anyone for grumbling?



Attendant adds color as machine kneads "salt water" taffy at Asbury Park.